

Rising Traffic Toll Alarms City

By REID BUNDY, Managing Editor

The sharply rising traffic toll within the city is becoming a source of mounting concern for police and other city officials, a check by the HERALD revealed this week.

Comparative figures for the first three months of 1959 show a marked increase over the same period of 1958, according to police department statistics.

A TOTAL of 367 traffic accidents had been recorded on Torrance streets through March 31 last year; during the same period this year, the total has reached 437, an increase of 70 accidents in a three-month period.

Injury accidents and those in which a fatality occurred have shown the same marked increase, the police records show. Injury accidents during the first three months of 1959 totaled 102 by the end of March while a year ago, the total was 87 at the same time.

Accidents with fatalities had totaled five by the end of March this year; and had totaled only two last year.

Three of the 1959 fatalities were pedestrians, officers point out, and each of the three was in an area where pedestrians are not normally encountered.

WHAT IS TO blame for the dramatic increase in traffic accidents?

"California has more than six million automobiles registered this year, and more than three million of these are registered in Southern California," Assistant Chief M. H. Porter of the Torrance Police Department says. Torrance, of course, is getting its share of this heavy traffic load—more of it each day.

"Design and construction of new thoroughfares has not kept pace with the increase in traffic in the Southland," William O. Winther, accident investigation officer of the police department says. "Traffic is increasing faster than we can build roads," he adds.

But the freak accident and the accident which can be blamed on road hazards does not account for the sharp rise in the number of accidents in the city, Lt. Don Nash, head of the police traffic bureau, points out.

With the aid of a large city map on which all accidents are charted, he can show where a major concentration of accidents is at the modern, well-designed, well-lighted, and scientifically controlled intersections—intersections where the latest techniques of engineering have been employed to reduce accidents.

POINTING TO THE MAP, he shows you that the pins used to mark the types of accidents are heavy around such intersections at 174th and Crenshaw, 174th and Hawthorne, Hawthorne and Sepulveda, Pacific Coast Hwy. and Crenshaw, and other such intersections.

Other areas of town show scattered records of accidents—nothing to indicate an engineering hazard.

What is the answer to the traffic problem?

Councilman Bob Jahn, who has served on the city traffic commission for the past two years, suggested to the council recently that the city employ a traffic engineer to set up proper flow channels for traffic through the city.

A COMPLETE PROGRAM would include redesigning of through streets and the elimination of engineering hazards throughout the city—straightening curves, doing away with sharp dips, clearing blind corners, and installing proper traffic control signals. All of this would require a heavy expenditure of funds.

As an immediate step, police officers agree, the enforcement of traffic regulations as they now exist should be stepped up on all city streets, slowing down the speeder and the reckless driver; and making it unpleasant to

violate safe driving practices anywhere in the city at any time. This, too, would cost money as the present police force is extended to the limit with the officers divided into three shifts, and assigned to traffic, patrol, detectives, juvenile, administrative, and other posts.

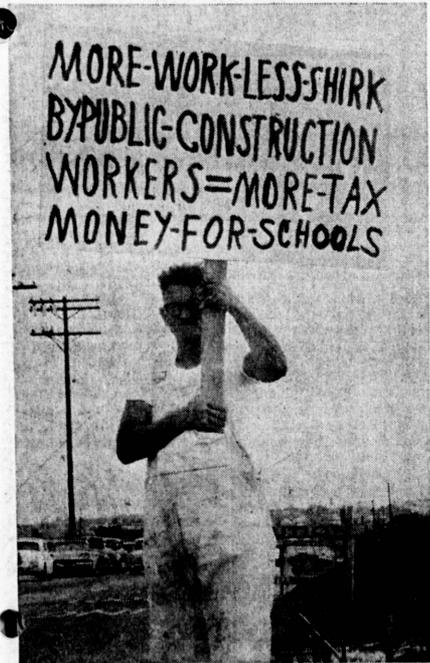
A THIRD solution is with the driver. Each driver must drive as though each other car on the road is a potential killer—which is coming to be nearer and nearer a fact.

"The common courtesies of the road and safe driving practices on the part of all motorists would go far in decreasing the carnage on the city's streets.

It doesn't always happen to the other person, as several hundred persons who have been injured in traffic accidents here this year can testify.

A "get tough" policy with all violators probably would influence more drivers to observe normal safety rules, but it's not the best solution.

Until driver themselves realize the potential dangers of a two-ton auto hurtling along the roadway at a high rate of speed, the city can expect to see a mounting traffic accident toll.



PICKETS JOB . . . Weaver H. Jones, Torrance plastering contractor, reports activity on road construction job on Western Ave. near Narbonne High School took a sharp turn upward yesterday after he spent the previous afternoon picketing the area with a sign berating the "shirking worker." Jones maintains the jobs are costing the taxpayers more than they should. (Herald Photo)



YOUR SECOND FRONT PAGE

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APRIL 9, 1959 TORRANCE HERALD Twenty-three



AUTO DEMOLISHED . . . The car in which a 7-year-old Los Angeles girl died is being carried away by wrecking service after accident here Sunday. This is one of a series of photos taken by Bud Blankenship and Danny Kirks as a photography project of Explorer Post 241. Blankenship is an advisor, Kirks an Eagle Scout. Scenes such as this are becoming more common with the city's mounting accident rate.



DAILY SCENE . . . Scenes like this are becoming a daily event on Torrance streets. Here, Don Hamilton, sergeant in charge of detectives (far left), watches as ambulance attendants place injured man on stretcher following an accident. Accidents will continue until drivers learn the potential of their vehicle for destruction, or until engineering makes it impossible to have an accident, officials say. (Herald photo)

City Council Briefs

In regular session Tuesday evening, the Torrance city council:

Held for further study by the staff a request by Don Matthews for removal of Eucalyptus trees on Madison St. south of 230th St.

Denied a request by James S. Dresser, 23720 Allene Ave., for permit to construct commercial buildings on Arlington Ave. between 236th Place and 237th St. The area is in the water zone of Narbonne Ranch Water Co. No. 3 and was recently declared a hazard because of low water pressures.

Approved recommendation of City Manager George Stevens that Airport Manager Jack Egan be authorized to attend California Association of Airport Executives conference in Monterey May 5, 6, and 7, and that Policewoman Regina Ryan be authorized to attend the California Woman Peace Officers Assn. conference in San Jose May 25, 26, and 27 with appropriate expenses paid.

APPROVED recommendation by city manager that the city negotiate for easement across Pacific Electric Co. right of way south of 203rd St. at Arlington in exchange for vacating strip of present Arlington Ave. in that area.

Approved oversize sign request for O'Rourke Realty at 23870 Hawthorne Ave.

Concurred in recommendation from Acting City Engineer Ronald Bishop that a two-pole traffic signal with actuation on the refinery site be installed on 190th St. and the main entrance to the GP refinery. General Petroleum will be asked to contribute \$4000 for the installation.

GRANTED free license to Scout Troop 1299 to con-

duct fashion show at the Civic Auditorium April 29.

Concurred in recommendation of License Inspector Gale Whitacre that Frank W. Balcock United Shows be granted license to conduct carnival at the rear of the Food Giant Market at Pacific Coast Hwy. and Hawthorne April 15 through 19.

Concurred "in principal" in plan to move Walteria fire station onto airport and referred to city manager for budget studies.

Approved request of Chester & Trefethan to sublease airport property to Doak Aircraft.

Ordered an earlier proposal for leasing of airport property by Pilots, Inc., be filed when airport manager reported no response to requests for firm to complete leasing arrangements.

APPROVED recommendation of airport commission that A. D. Witchel and the Skyline Co. be granted permission to sublease a portion of Chester Hangar on airport for aircraft sales, premises to be occupied in common with Duschak Helicopter Service.

Returned recommendation of airport commission that council reconsider previous action in ordering power lines at the airport to be placed underground for 120 feet across the service road with the request that information on costs of placing other power lines under the ground asked for by the council recently be submitted.

Referred request for variance on 180th St. between Amie Ave. and Baily Drive to city attorney for clarification of terms. The case, Planning Commission Case No. 564, was initiated by the planning com-

mission at the suggestion of the city council.

DEFERRED until April 21 complaints on parking adjacent to Jehovah Witnesses Kingdom Hall near 180th and Hickman Drive, and asked that representatives of all parties be at the meeting.

Approved series of traffic commission recommendations for traffic control and parking measures. Includes one-hour parking at meters between Andreo and Arlington and Carson and two-hour parking from Cabrillo to Andreo.

Approved weed abatement resolution.

Approved resolution setting

forth names of streets in Central Manufacturing District (north of Maricopa Ave. west of Crenshaw Blvd.) Streets to be known as Hawaii, Alaska, Columbia, and Bush.

Approved resolution authorizing agreement for water service to Adams Elementary School to be constructed on 238th St. at Arlington Ave.

ADOPTED Ordinance 1081 changing name of Valerie St. to Anza between Torrance Blvd. and Del Amo Blvd. at first reading.

Adopted Ordinance 1082 making it a misdemeanor to throw or deposit garbage or

rubbish in public places at first reading.

Ordered Ordinance 1083 rezoning property at 230th St. and Hawthorne Ave. held for one week to permit rechecking of legal description to assure future right of way for extension of Lomita Blvd.

Approved Ordinance 1084 rezoning property in proposed Tract No. 24819 in North Torrance to conform with residential use.

Approved police department recommendation that L. A. County Sheriff's department be authorized to issue bicycle licenses through the schools in the city.



EXAMINE APPLICATIONS . . . Studying applications of candidates for the Miss Torrance title in the forthcoming Miss America Pageant are Torrance Junior Chamber of Commerce committee members, pictured above, left to right, Al Pell, Carl Fisher, Ted Hill (standing), Lou Karlow, Bob Vromon and George Gillum. Would-be applicants must be 18 years of age by Sept. 1 and not over 28, unmarried, a resident of Torrance for the past six months, and must possess some form of talent such as dancing, acting or singing. Deadline on applications, which may be obtained from the Chamber office, is April 20 at 4:30 p.m.

Ramblings

The Symphony Called 'April'

Another page was torn from the calendar this week. Unlike tradition's raging lion turned lamb, March came and went like a soft kitten that stayed to play and purr awhile and then depart on gently padded paws by an open door through which she will some day return.

And as the symphony of April begins, my ears are filled with a thousand refrains and my nostrils recall the April fragrance of all the Aprils past.

The sweet perfume of a row of lilac bushes that swayed softly in the April breeze beside a hedge of golden forsythias in the Ohio garden that was mine one April still haunts me as in reverie I hear the poignant strains of "Lilacs in the Rain" and dwell nostalgically upon the line, "the scent of lilacs remains in my heart."

And I can still smell the damp earth my trowel scooped up in that garden after a storm in a bygone April as I again hear in my heart the voice of Al Jolson boom out the lyrics of "April Showers"—as only he could do it.

Running through all the Aprils memory can recall is the nursery tune that for me has always been associated with this month, the simple chords of an uncomplicated occasion, "Happy Birthday dear Ronnie, happy birthday to you." Five days after the voices of my two small boys sing the "mommy" version my ears have grown accustomed to these past few years, I'll join in singing "Happy Birthday to Daddy" to the April-born spouse with whom I've shared all the April memories of my adult life.

For me, Al Jolson is completely wrapped up in the April song that fills my heart. I remember packing dishes as I sang "a sun-kissed maid says don't be late" over and over the April we left Ohio five years ago, when "California Here I Come" was the family theme-song and we departed on the journey that was eventually to bring us to Torrance after a four-year stopover in San Diego.

But in every city of every state, for the past 13 years my personal April melody has always ended with the same refrain, "Anniversary Waltz," by—you guessed it—Al Jolson. You see this April-born gal married her April-born guy on the day that sets the clocks back—and called it daylight saving time—the last Sunday of April.